

Minutes from November 18, 2021 Hiawatha Gardens Task Force (HGTF) Meeting (via Zoom)

Present: Nancy Fortuin, Roy Chaney, Dole Grebenik, Emily Lozano, Alan Delwiche, Tweed Kezziah, Bill Koerner, Ken Jaray, Ann Nichols, Susan Watkins

Absent: Judith Chandler, Denise Howell, Laura Neumann

The meeting began at 3:30 p.m. Minutes of the November 4 meeting were approved with minor revisions.

Task Force Discussion of Hiawatha Gardens Restoration and Design Phase 1 Report

- Before meeting with BVH, the historic architectural firm hired by the City and authors of the Report, Nancy asked Task Force members to provide their impressions of the Report, which follow:

Pleased by:

- The site plan in general.
- The amount of landscaping/vegetation in the plan.
- Depth of mobility hub information.
- “It triggered my imagination.”
- Maintained most of the parking.
- Liked the dispersed mobility elements.
- It’s a good product that shouldn’t be ignored but it’s incomplete.

Concerned about:

- Bathrooms are detached from mobility hub.
- It’s light on information about the historic structure.
- It totally missed the concept design of the dancehall
- It’s a parking plan, not a full Hiawatha Gardens site plan.
- Didn’t include the two options for the dancehall community center/event center that we asked for. We also asked for a single external appearance graphic of the dancehall but didn’t get it.
- It looks like we got all of the civil engineer’s work but none of the historic architect’s work.
- It lacks Phase 1.A. and 1.B. described in the scope of services.
- The report should be marked as a draft.
- Add a covered breezeway between buildings.
- I was disappointed with the site plan; the mobility facilities are scattered.
- It needs to include a connected building to the north like it was in the 20s.
- I was shocked that there was no reference to the dancehall building.
- I don’t want any dead ends in the parking lot.
- It mentions a spring on the site. There is no proof of a spring, and if it’s there, it’s capped.
- It’s missing the conceptual design of the dancehall and other structures.

Project Updates

- Another Council briefing is coming up on December 14, with agenda packet materials due by December 8.
- A MACH Board briefing is due in January; Dole and Ann will present.

- Ann helped City Planning staff review proposals from the historic preservation consultants. The chosen consultant is to produce a report by Dec. 31, 2021 and present it to the Historic Preservation Commission on January 4, 2022.
- Emily said she has completed the historic planning grant application and it will be submitted today.
- There has been no change to the project budget.

Status of the Building

- Dole said the building sheathing is complete and the building is well protected. Two doors with locks have been installed. All perimeter work is complete, including installation of a berm to divert runoff. Any water under the building drains into the Creek. Sump pumps under the building are working. A security camera in the building will be installed soon.

Presentation of Report by BVH

- Jennifer Davis, Melanie Short, and Eileen Kemp from the BVH team reviewed the Phase 1 Report with the Task Force. They stressed that the Report is preliminary and they are happy to make changes before it is shared with the public.
- Following their presentation, Task Force members offered the following comments and questions:
 - There is a lot of interesting, useful stuff in the Report but we are concerned about the lack of visuals of the dancehall structure. That was the first priority of the Task Force.
 - We need the word Draft written on this Report.
 - The concept of an event center needs clarification. Is dual purpose (community center and event center) possible?
 - The parking lot flow and greenery is good.
 - The existing site plan building footprint needs to be changed because of the demolition (on page 8 in the Report.)
 - We should set some principles for the plan. I would suggest: connect the restrooms to the building; highlight the Creek connection; and restore the dancehall exterior to the 1920s-1950s era.
 - In considering an event center versus a community center, you need extra amenities for an event center, which increases the cost.
 - We need to include options for the community to consider regarding whether the buildings should be connected or at least have a sheltered connection.
 - Is it possible to include a prep kitchen as part of the mobility hub in one of the options in the alternatives? (BVH said it will be included in one of the alternatives).

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting is at 3:30 p.m. on December 2.